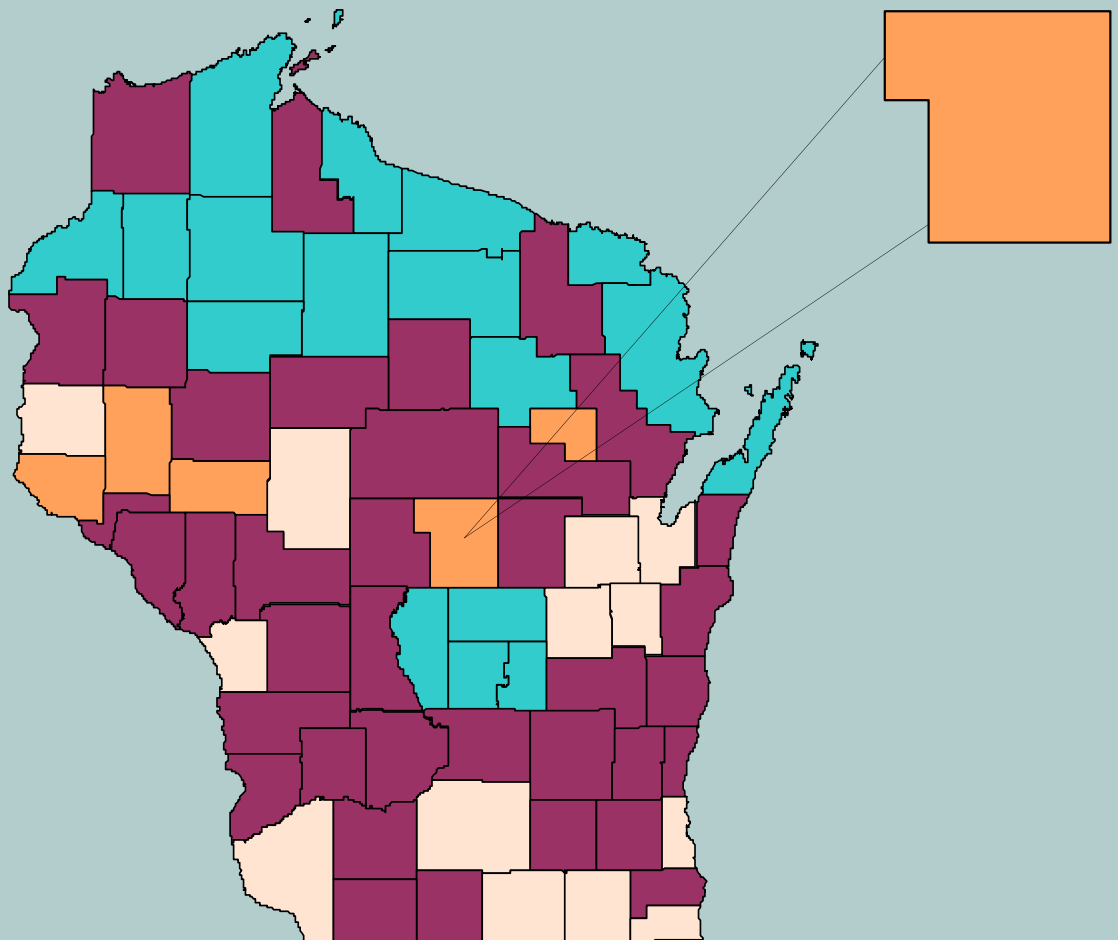


# Portage County Workforce Profile

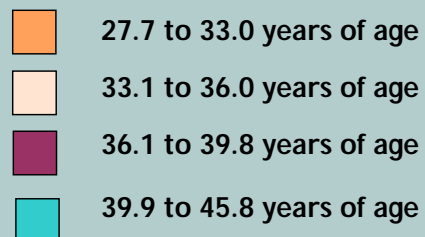
Median Age by County, 2000



Your complete  
guide to the  
state of the  
labor force of  
today and a  
glimpse into  
the economy of  
tomorrow.



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
October 2002



Source: Census 2000 of the United States



## County Population

Between 1990 and 2000, almost 5,800 people added to the population of the county, which represented a growth rate of 9.4 percent. This is somewhat higher growth compared to other counties in north central Wisconsin, but was just slightly slower growth than the Statewide average of 9.6 percent and considerably slower than the U.S. rate of 13.2 percent. Sixty-four percent of the 1990-2000 population growth via natural increase, which is the net number of births exceeding the number of deaths. The remainder of the population growth was the result of migration into the county. The rate of growth of the population of Portage County from 2000 to 2001 was 0.8 percent, which is actually a bit faster than either Wisconsin or the United States.

Although Portage County is predominantly a rural area, The main urban center of Stevens Point is growing at a healthy rate, as are the towns in the immediate vicinity (Plover, Hull, Park Ridge, Whiting). There has been a growth explosion of sorts in recent years in Stevens Point, especially to the east towards Custer/Amherst. In the years to come, many developments will affect the population in areas of Portage county. Major road building projects involving the expansion of federal Highway 10 in and

around Stevens Point are already leading to an increase in home building along the Wisconsin River-highway 10 corridor between Point and the Wood County line north of Junction City, on what was formerly farm and forest land. The above mentioned eastward expansion involves not only new subdivisions, but many businesses, as well. A two lane improvement eastward has almost involved the village of Custer, which just a few years ago was nothing but potato fields and scrub land.

At this time, population growth is keeping pace with the last decennial growth rate of 9.4 percent. This is positive mainly because population projections for Wisconsin and, frankly, North America forecast considerably slower population increase in the years to come. Whether this pace holds until 2010, remains to be seen as county-level population projections are not available at the time of writing and the state's projected population growth is just a little over six percent.

### Total Population

	2000 Census	January 1, 2001 Estimate	Percent change
United States	281,421,906	283,474,000	0.7%
Wisconsin	5,363,675	5,400,449	0.7%
Portage County	67,182	67,692	0.8%

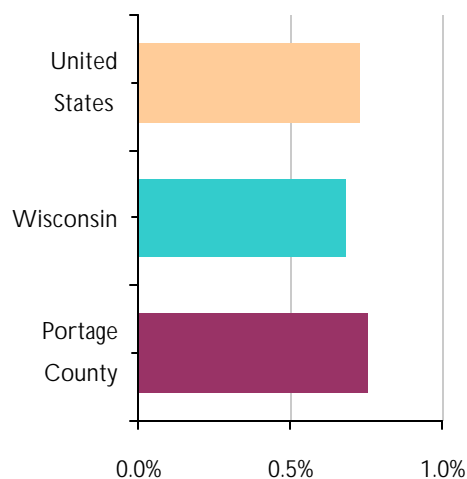
### Ten Largest Municipalities

Stevens Point, City	24,551	24,698	0.6%
Plover, Village	10,520	10,682	1.5%
Hull, Town	5,493	5,516	0.4%
Stockton, Town	2,896	2,919	0.8%
Plover, Town	2,415	2,418	0.1%
Grant, Town	2,020	2,032	0.6%
Sharon, Town	1,936	1,956	1.0%
Whiting, Village	1,760	1,765	0.3%
Lanark, Town	1,449	1,467	1.2%
Amherst, Town	1,435	1,444	0.6%

\* Portage portion only

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services, 2002

### Population Growth 2000-2001

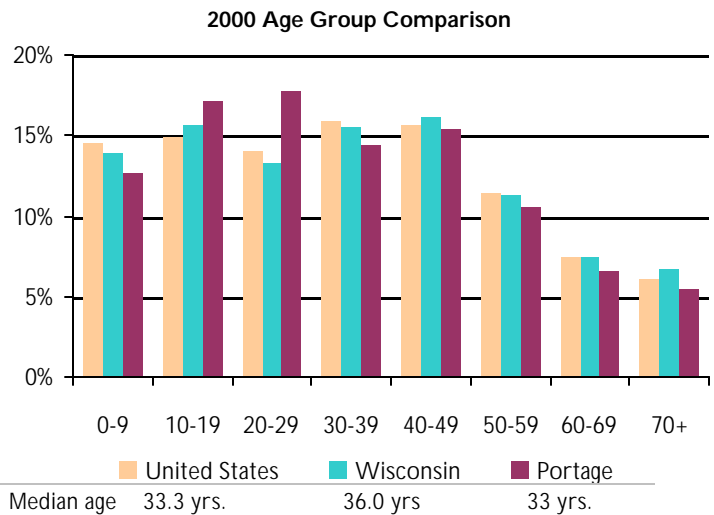




The labor force is composed of two elements—people who are working (either full time or part time) and people who are not working, but looking for work. These may be first time entrants, workers released from their last job and seeking another, or those reentering the workforce after a period of time. Typical of the latter category are retired workers returning to work and female workers going back to work after a number of years.

The term used to describe the relationship between the labor force and population is the labor force participation rate (please see page 3). An interesting way to look at the labor force of the county is by age and the number of people are that are in the labor force from each age group, or cohort. This information will indicate future labor challenges, for example, the approaching worker shortage due to the “baby boomer” retirements and the impact that will have on occupational levels all over Wisconsin. Portage County has a large number of workers in these older age categories relative to its younger population.

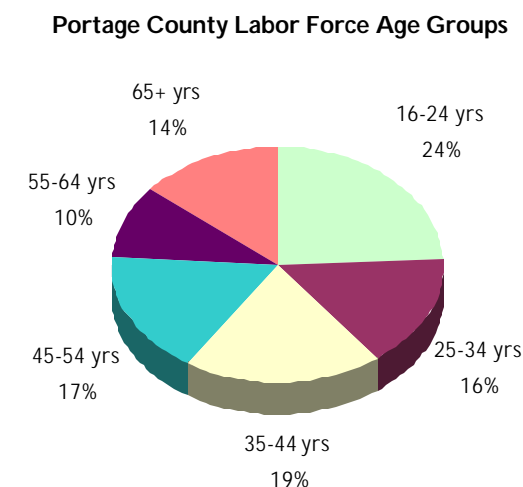
A display of age groups in Portage County shows



Source: US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, *Census 2000*

some differences from the state and national average distributions. At the latter end of the scale, for instance, in the range of ages 50-70+ years of age, the proportion is nearly equal to the state and the nation. Considering the ages between about 26-50, or what one might call the prime working years, the Portage County totals are a bit higher than other counties in the district, which means a good number of younger workers in the labor force to replace those leaving soon due to retirement.

## County Civilian Labor Force



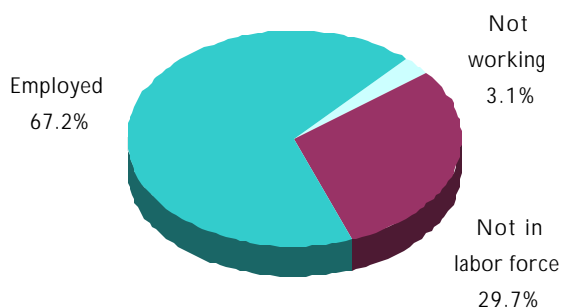
Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Census Bureau, *Census 2000*

The graph to the left looks at those only ages 16 and over, or the “labor force aged”. Those over 55 in the Portage County labor force are only about 24 percent of the total labor force. The other age cohorts (ages 16 through 54) take up the rest. This is different than most of the other counties of the state, who generally have a higher percentage of the older workers. The thing to remember about the oldest group is that, although there is no upper limit to the age of the labor force. In reality, it is questionable if many members of the 65+ element are looking for work, or interested in working at all. Although in recent years, older workers have been returning to the labor force in increasing numbers, the exact number is hard to place and reliable statistics for the more rural areas of the state do not exist.



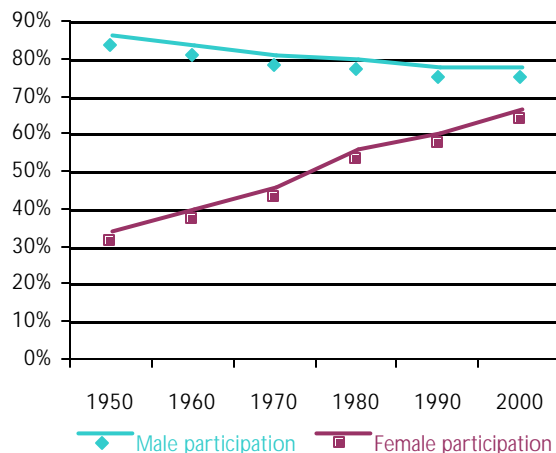
## State of Wisconsin - Portage County

### 2001 Labor Force Participation



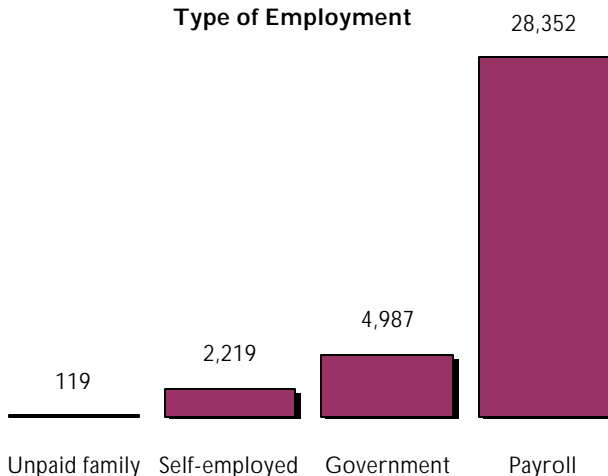
Source: Estimated from WI Dept. of Administration population estimates, Jan. 2001, US Census Bureau, and WI Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

### Labor Force Participation of Male and Female Residents



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Census Bureau, *Census 2000*

### Type of Employment



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Census Bureau, *Census 2000*

Almost 68 percent of the people in the Portage County labor force aged are employed. This could be either full time or part time employment. This pattern is about the same or slightly higher than other areas of the state, and about the same as other counties in the district. Those in the "not working" segment of the pie chart at the left are seen as in the labor force and looking for work, but not yet employed. The number of people in the labor force in Portage County decreased to about 37,100 in 2001 from about 37,800 in 1996. The exact reasons for this decline are not clear, but 700 workers in a field of nearly 40,000 is not large decline over a five year period, though if the decline continues it may be indicative of the demographic issues of aging population, that have been previously discussed.

The 40-54 aged segment of the labor force is one of the fastest growing. The eldest segment, 65 years and over, is largely out of the workforce, whether voluntarily or otherwise. The middle age group tends to have the most stable and highest paying jobs, and therefore often the highest income level.

An interesting phenomenon occurring in Portage County and elsewhere, is the growing number of women entering the labor force. This movement, which began in earnest during WW II, has been increasing strongly since the early 1950's as more women of all ages entered the workplace for both part- and full-time work. If the rate of female participation continues to increase, male and female rates may be equal in just a few years. Male rates of participation stood at about 80 percent in the post-war years and have declined to about 75 percent in the recent past. Actually, the rate of decline of male participation in Portage County is a bit smaller than elsewhere, and the rapid ascent of female participants is a bit sharper than some of the other counties of the River District. The reasons for more women entering the workforce are numerous, but the primary reason may be simply economic. It appears that two income households are nearly a necessity given current economic conditions.

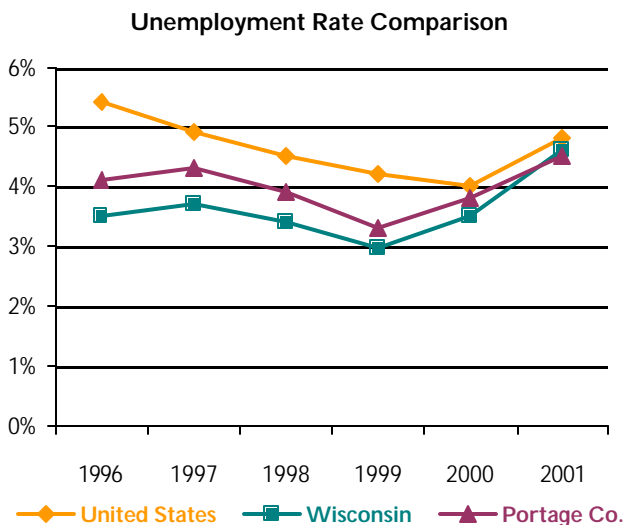


## State of Wisconsin - Portage County

(Note - Although these 1990 Census Commuting numbers have not yet been updated by the 2000 Census, we do not anticipate any significant changes in the general pattern of movement.)

Many Portage County residents leave the county each day to work. The vast majority of these commuting workers drive to Wood County more than any other county, and those entering Portage County from Wood County are about the same number, most of them probably working in the Stevens Point-Plover areas.

It is impossible to say what kinds of jobs these workers are commuting to, or what their professions are. They may be stable, permanent types of jobs, such as professional employment, or perhaps jobs in manufacturing in a neighboring county. Or, they are the kinds of jobs that typically take a person some distance from his or her home, like seasonal construction work. We do know that there is rather heavy commuting between Point and Rapids since improvements on Highway 54 and County P, but we will have to wait for the 2000 Census

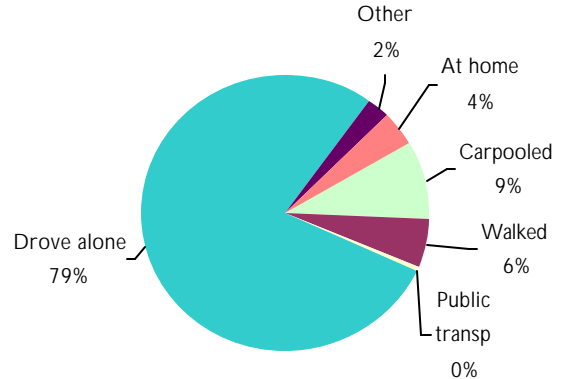


### Portage County Civilian Labor Force Data

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Labor Force	37,800	38,100	37,500	36,200	36,900	37,100
Employed	36,200	36,500	36,000	35,000	35,500	35,500
Unemployed	1,550	1,640	1,480	1,190	1,390	1,650
Unemployment Rate	4.1%	4.3%	3.9%	3.3%	3.8%	4.5%

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, revised March 2002

### County Travel-to-Work Patterns



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Census Bureau, Census 2000

commuting patterns data to confirm numbers.

A look at the travel-to-work patterns of Portage County workers reveals some interesting things about Portage County workers and their driving habits. Not surprisingly, most people drive to work alone. This is the pattern in other places as well, (inside and outside of Wisconsin), even where carpooling is strongly encouraged. Just over nine percent of work drivers carpoolled (how many in each car is not known). The percentage of people taking public transportation stands at almost about one percent, and this low number is typical of an area without a regular bus service.

Rates of unemployment in Portage County since mid-1996 have comfortably been below both state and national averages. The percentage of people in the labor force not working has risen steadily in the period of 1996—2001, but is still much lower than historical levels typical of certain periods in the 70's and 80's. The only really worrisome clouds on the horizon is the somewhat unsettled situation in the paper industry in the central state area and what this will mean for the long term economy in Portage County.



## County Industry Employment

### Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

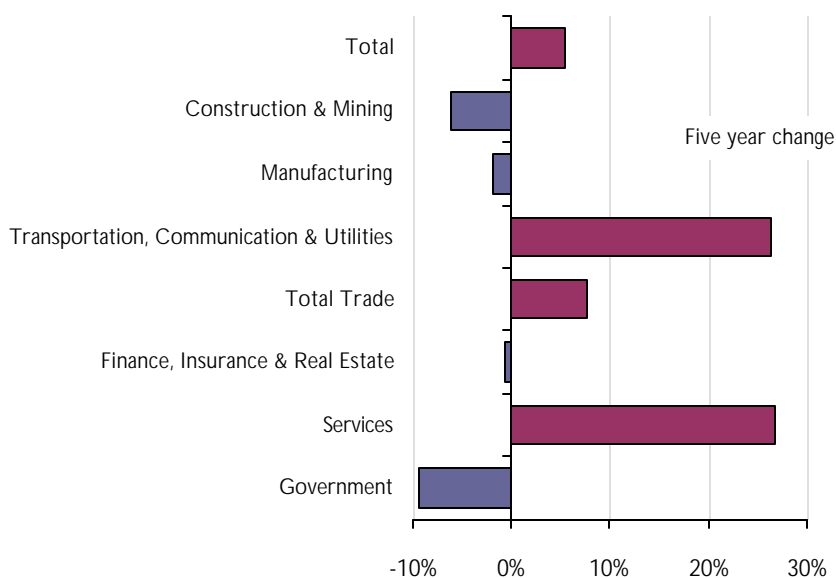
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Percent change	
							1 year	5 year
<b>Total</b>	30,946	31,622	31,898	32,413	32,973	32,652	-1.0%	5.5%
<b>Goods Producing</b>	7,145	7,628	7,194	6,954	7,385	6,973	-5.6%	-2.4%
Construction & Mining	1,068	1,261	1,071	1,162	1,135	1,005	-11.5%	-5.9%
Manufacturing	6,076	6,366	6,123	5,792	6,250	5,968	-4.5%	-1.8%
Durable	1,833	1,969	1,981	1,857	1,851	1,756	-5.2%	-4.2%
Nondurable	4,244	4,397	4,142	3,935	4,398	4,212	-4.2%	-0.7%
<b>Service Producing</b>	23,802	23,994	24,704	25,459	25,589	25,679	0.4%	7.9%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	1,537	1,624	1,770	1,841	1,820	1,943	6.8%	26.4%
Total Trade	7,335	7,583	7,621	7,783	7,878	7,910	0.4%	7.8%
Wholesale	1,406	1,465	1,514	1,578	1,594	1,529	-4.1%	8.8%
Retail	5,929	6,118	6,107	6,205	6,285	6,381	1.5%	7.6%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	3,788	3,796	3,655	3,437	3,597	3,765	4.7%	-0.6%
Services & Misc.	5,421	5,671	6,002	6,562	6,793	6,875	1.2%	26.8%
Total Government	5,721	5,320	5,656	5,837	5,501	5,186	-5.7%	-9.3%

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, Nonfarm wage and salary estimates, revised March 2002

Nonfarm wage and salary employment measures the number of jobs within a county excluding military, and self-employed workers. This data measures the number of jobs within the county without consideration of where the job-holder lives. Thus, this information is often referred to as "place of work" data.

When one looks at the employment picture in Portage County by industry over the period 1996—2001, there were increases in the job levels of some industry sectors and rather significant declines in others. Manufacturing lost about 100 jobs over that five year period. Construction also declined by a small number.

### Employment Change by Industry Division: 1996 to 2001



Source: WI DWD, Nonfarm wage and salary estimates, revised March 2002

The employment picture of Portage County bears watching in next few years as present employment trends indicate possible concerns in that labor market, particularly decline in nondurable goods manufacturing employment. This is somewhat unusual except as a seasonal fluctuation. As a paper producing county, Portage finds itself in the same position as others in the district where paper production is a major player—world overcapacity and competition are creating concerns over the future of this industry. But it is not paper alone in Portage County that bears watching. Manufacturing is one of the pillars of the local economy and there have been closings and layoffs in the recent past and the immediate economic future is uncertain.



## State of Wisconsin - Portage County

### Top 10 Employers

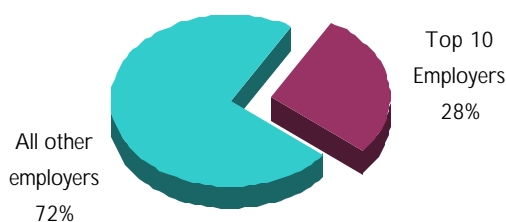
Company	Product or Service	Size
Sentry Insurance A Mutual Co	Insurance Carrier	1,000+
Stevens Point Public School	Public Education	1,000+
University of Wisconsin- Stevens	State University	1,000+
The Copps Corp. (Roundy Foods)	Grocery Goods & Related	1,000+
St. Michael's Hospital of Stevens	Health Care	500-999
Stora Enso North America Corp.	Paper Manufacturing	500-999
McCain Foods	Grocery Goods & Related	500-999
County of Portage	County Government	500-999
Fiqu's	Mail Order Gifts	500-999
Ministry Medical Group	Health Care	500-999

### Top 10 Industry Groups

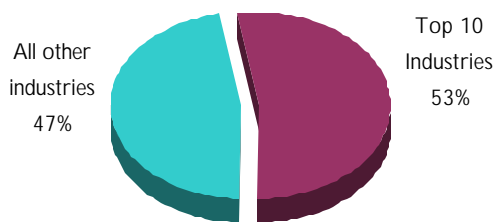
Industry Group	March 2001		Numeric change	
	Employers	Employees	1-year	5-year
Educational Services	7	3,002	62	146
Insurance Carriers	*	*	*	*
Eating and Drinking Places	129	2,171	58	133
Health Services	65	2,129	74	550
Food and Kindred Products	12	1,870	-30	4
Paper and Allied Products	*	*	*	*
Executive, Legislative, and General	25	1,158	27	-76
Food Stores	14	1,136	-3	-50
Trucking and Warehousing	59	1,125	-99	-6
Miscellaneous Retail	72	1,010	283	350

\*data suppressed to maintain confidentiality

**Top 10 Employers' Share of Nonfarm Employment**



**Top 10 Industry Group Share of Nonfarm Employment**



Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, ES-202 file tape, December 2001

When one looks at the industrial landscape of Portage County, one of the most obvious features is the relatively large size of individual businesses compared to other counties in the district. The larger employers in the county have 1,000 or more employees. The employer mix is everything between manufacturing, small retail, and an insurance company world headquarters. The diversity of businesses is a source of economic strength for this

area. In Portage County, the top ten industries portion of the employment picture is about 30 percent, which is a good balance for this area. Health care businesses are becoming an increasingly important element of the business landscape in Portage County. In recent years there has been important consolidation of health services which will mean increased opportunities for employment in these areas, contributing to an already tight labor market.





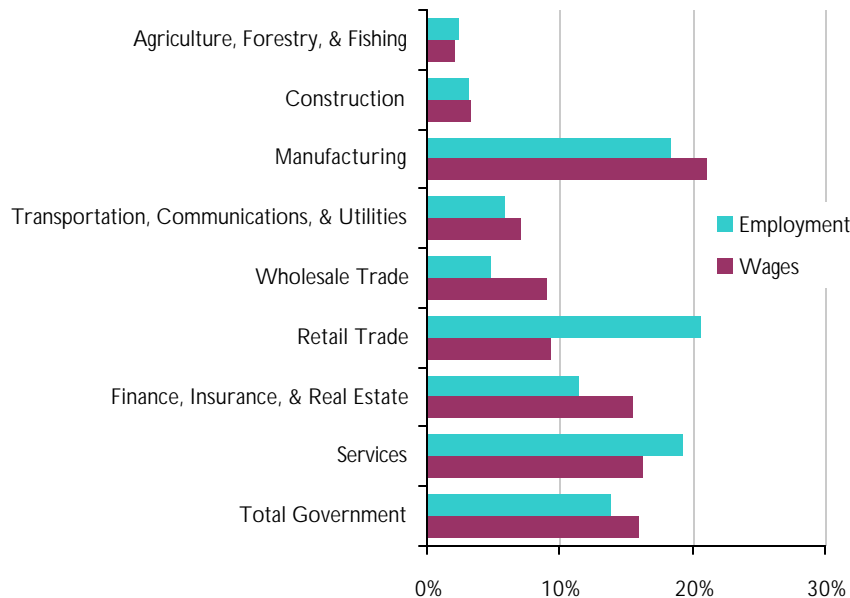
## State of Wisconsin - Portage County

When looking at the table at the bottom of the page, the one thing that seems to stand out is the fourth column, indicating the *percent of the state average wage* paid in different industries in Portage County. The wage levels in Portage County in some industries are a good deal above the state average. Manufacturing is rather low at just over 17 percent below the state average, which may seem unusual considering the presence of a large paper manufacturing plant in the county, whose jobs are the best paying in the area. But, there is a wide variety of

manufacturing in Portage County, with several smaller businesses paying on a scale well below that of the paper mills. Transportation and utilities, another high paying industrial category in most areas of the state, is also a bit lower than elsewhere. Construction employment, usually one of the better paying sectors, compares well with the rest of the state, and certainly pays better than the more rural counties within the Wisconsin River District.

Considering employment and wage distribution in Portage County, several things stand out. Somewhat in contrast with other areas, retail trade accounts for a good number of jobs in Portage County, but has a relatively low share of county wages, mainly due to a large presence of part-time employment and entry-level wages. Manufacturing employment levels account for the highest percentage of jobs and the highest percentage of wages. Finance, insurance, and real estate, which has a higher number of employees here due mainly to the presence of the world headquarters of a major insurance company, accounts for just over 13 percent of total wages paid in Portage County.

**Employment & Wage Distribution by Industry Division**



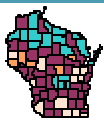
**Annual Average Wage By Industry Division**

	Portage Co. Annual Average Wage	Wisconsin Annual Average Wage	Percent of State Average	1-year percent change	5-year percent change
All Industries*	\$ 29,020	\$ 30,922	93.8%	6.6%	23.3%
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	\$ 25,281	\$ 22,565	112.0%	0.4%	23.6%
Construction	\$ 30,512	\$ 39,011	78.2%	0.1%	17.2%
Manufacturing	\$ 33,315	\$ 39,739	83.8%	1.9%	15.9%
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	\$ 34,487	\$ 36,639	94.1%	7.4%	25.3%
Wholesale Trade	\$ 54,741	\$ 40,521	135.1%	68.0%	86.8%
Retail Trade	\$ 13,243	\$ 14,596	90.7%	5.2%	17.6%
Finance, Insurance, & Real estate	\$ 39,247	\$ 40,933	95.9%	7.9%	31.2%
Services	\$ 24,501	\$ 28,775	85.1%	1.9%	22.9%
Total Government	\$ 33,589	\$ 33,785	99.4%	3.4%	17.6%

\* Mining excluded from table since wages were suppressed to maintain confidentiality in every county

Source: WI DWD, *Employment, Wages, and Taxes Due covered by Wisconsin's U.C. Law, 2002*





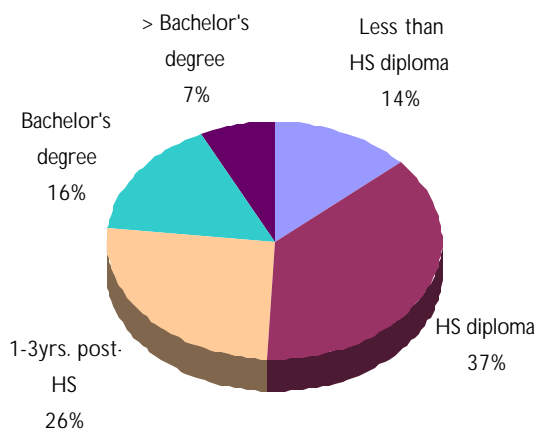
## Occupation and Education Characteristics of County Population

It should not be surprising that the occupational profile of Portage County is going to be different than that of the state, or most other counties, for that matter. Taking a close look at the occupational makeup of any area—county, city, state—especially when making comparisons with other areas can tell us a few things about what the working people there are busy with, which industries are prominent in the area, and by extension, what the needs of the businesses involved are going to be as far as worker skills are concerned. What this often means is that the educational attainment of workers in that area, is an important factor in the lure, development and expansion of businesses that desire particular skill sets, experience and education.

In a general sense, it may be hard to tell which comes first, the need for certain skills in any given labor market, or the aspirations and career plans of individuals. That would depend on the point of view one takes. But ultimately, people go where the jobs are, which may help to explain the current “brain drain” phenomenon in Wisconsin. When we look at Portage County and compare educational attainment with employment by occupation, what link exists (if any) between them?

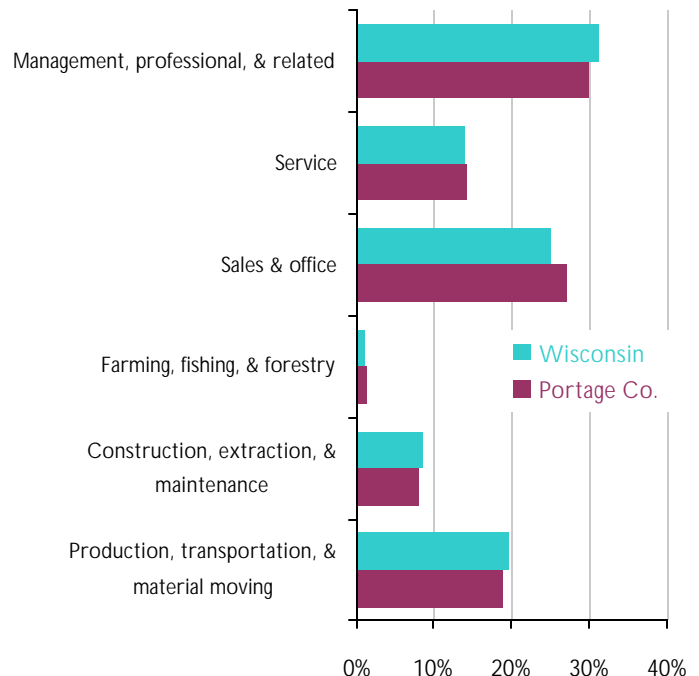
Not surprisingly, the majority of people have a high school diploma, with just under 15 percent not having graduated. Beyond high school, another 49 per-

### Education Attainment in 2000



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Census Bureau, *Census 2000*

### Employment by Occupation Group: 2000



US Department of Commerce, Census 2000

cent or so have taken further study, the majority of these probably in areas of vocational preparation. College grads compose about 20 percent of the population. This is higher than most northern counties and on a par with the larger counties to the south. This is not surprising given that the county is home to a state university. Though, the presence of a university in Stevens Point does not necessarily mean that professional level workers will be more numerous, as most graduates presumably leave the area for job opportunities.

Professional level occupations in Portage County are slightly lower in proportion than the state average. Jobs in sales (wholesale and retail trade) are a bit higher than the state average, as are service jobs. This may roughly accord with the educational profile of the county, with its somewhat higher number of highly educated workers. Presumably, those without post-secondary education would be in the blue collar sector of the work force. Most other occupational groups compare well with state percentages, however.



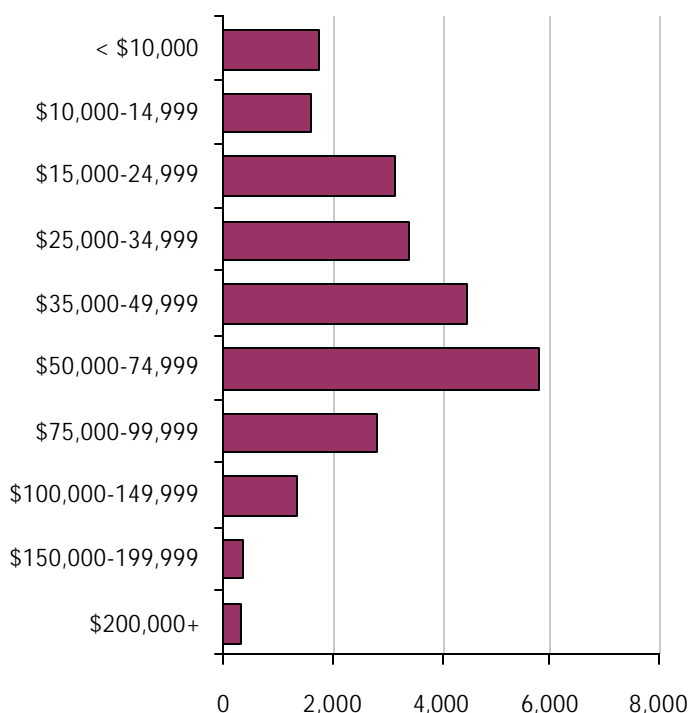
## County Income Information

Per capita income is total income divided by the total number of residents. Income includes wages earned, dividends from investments, and transfer payments from the government. Portage County's per capita personal income was about \$4,300 below that of the state's in 2000.

Per capita income can be influenced by the number of wage earners, average family size, and is just as much a product of population dynamics as the dollars themselves. Per capita income can influence the type of services, prices and housing available within a county. Over the past six years, Portage County per capita income has increased by about \$4,600, or about 20 percent over the period. This is not an inconsiderable increase for a rather rural northern county, and stands up well when compared to the state.

Wages paid for work within a county can impact the type of goods and services purchased. Examining wage structures can be an important part of the hiring process for both job seekers and employers. Wages in Portage County, especially in the trade, service, and manufacturing sectors, will compare quite well to most other occupations. In the area of net earnings, Portage County compares well to the state and to the nation, as it does in the areas of dividends, interest, rents, and transfer payments. One of the characteristics of the

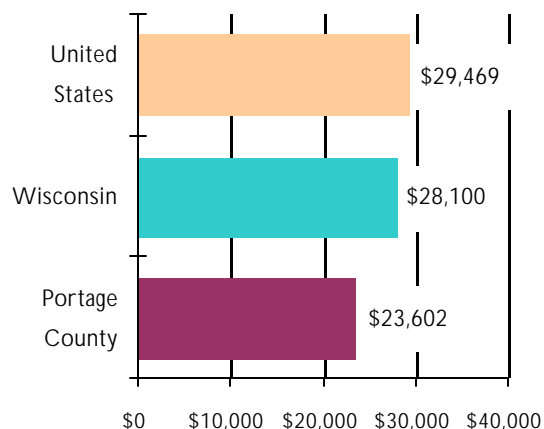
**Households by Income Range**  
Median household income in Portage Co. \$43,487



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Census Bureau, *Census 2000*

county, and in fact, the tri-county area of which it is a part, is that income comes a wide variety of sources beside so-called job wages, or retirement benefits.

**Per Capita Personal Income 2000**



Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

**Components of Total Personal Income: 2000**

